

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BONN 00898 01 OF 03 171845Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 HA-05 ACDA-12 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 OES-07  
EB-08 /105 W

-----032919 180141Z /63

R 171811Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BONN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4868  
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USMISSION USBERLIN  
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 00898

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV, BQG  
SUBJECT: STOBBE'S ROLE AS PRESIDENT OF THE BUNDESRAT  
IN 1978

REFS: (A) USBER 0101  
(B) USBER 0073  
(C) BONN 302 (PARA 13)  
(D) USBER 0026  
(E) 77 BONN 21415 (PARA 5)

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE FRG BONN GROUP REP (VON BRAUNMUEHL)  
CONVENED AN INFORMAL DISCUSSION BY BONN GROUP REPS ON  
THE SUBJECT ON JANUARY 12. HE INDICATED THAT HE  
WISHED TO ELICIT THEIR VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT IN THE  
HOPE OF MINIMIZING THE EXPECTED SOVIET REACTION AND SAID THE  
FOREIGN OFFICE IS CONCERNED ABOUT THAT REACTION. HE  
INDICATED THAT STOBBE AS ACTING FRG PRESIDENT WILL DO  
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PAGE 02 BONN 00898 01 OF 03 171845Z

NO MORE IN CONNECTION WITH BERLIN THAN WHAT PRESIDENT  
SCHEEL HAS DONE, AND PREFERABLY MUCH LESS.  
DISCUSSION OF SUBJECT LED TO HIS AGREEMENT TO  
SECURE THE PREPARATION OF A STUDY OF THOSE EVENTS  
WHICH MIGHT CAUSE DIFFICULTIES WITH THE SOVIETS.  
STOBBE'S ELECTION AND TENURE AS BUNDESRAT PRESIDENT,  
ESPECIALLY WHEN HE IS ACTING PRESIDENT OF THE FRG,

COULD BE ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS DIFFERENCES WE WILL HAVE WITH THE SOVIETS OVER BERLIN DURING THE NEXT TWO YEARS BUT THE FOREIGN OFFICE'S ADVANCE PLANNING AND STOBBE'S DISCRETION WILL HOPEFULLY STAND US IN GOOD STEAD. ACTION REQUESTED: SEE PARAGRAPH 11. END SUMMARY

1. ON JANUARY 12 VON BRAUNMUEHL INVITED THE THREE ALLIED BONN GROUP REPS AS WELL AS MEICHSNER OF THE BERLIN REPRESENTATION TO AN INFORMAL EVENING DISCUSSION OF STOBBE'S SCHEDULED ELECTION THIS FALL AS PRESIDENT OF THE BUNDESRAT. VON BRAUNMUEHL SAID THAT THE FRG IS CONCERNED THAT STOBBE'S ASSUMPTION OF THE PRESIDENCY WILL BE CAUSE FOR A PARTICULARLY STRONG SOVIET REACTION, ESPECIALLY SINCE THIS POSITION WOULD ALSO MAKE STOBBE ACTING PRESIDENT OF THE FRG WHEN PRESIDENT SCHEEL IS ILL OR ABSENT. THE FRG'S VIEW IS THAT STOBBE'S ASSUMPTION OF THESE DUTIES IS NOT ILLEGAL AND THAT THE RESULT OF AN FRG OR ALLIED ATTEMPT TO PREVENT IT WOULD BE A SEVERE INTERNAL POLITICAL REACTION IN THE FRG. HE RECALLED THAT THIS QUESTION HAD BEEN THE SUBJECT OF ALLIED AND FRG CONSULTATIONS ON JANUARY 16 AND MARCH 22, 1957 WHEN OTTO SUHR WAS MAYOR OF BERLIN AND AT THAT TIME IT WAS AGREED THAT THERE WAS NO OBJECTION TO HIS BEING ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE BUNDESRAT. THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN NO SUCH CONSULTATIONS IN 1967 PRIOR TO MAYOR SCHUETZ ASSUMING THE SAME POSITION. CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BONN 00898 01 OF 03 171845Z

2. VON BRAUNMUEHL SAID THAT IN VIEW OF THE ANTICIPATED PROBLEMS WITH THE SOVIETS, HE WISHED TO HAVE A PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION OF THE SUBJECT WITH THE ALLIED BONN GROUP REPS ON AN INFORMAL BASIS AND WITHOUT NOTES. THE UK REP (EYERS) CITED SOVIET CONSUL GENERAL BYKOV'S STATEMENT (REF A) AND STOBBE'S REMARKS (REF B) AS INDICATIONS THAT THE SOVIETS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC ARE BEGINNING TO BECOME AWARE OF THIS MATTER. HE AGREED THAT WE WILL HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THE SOVIETS AND SAID HE HAD SEVERAL CONCERNS WHICH HE WOULD RETURN TO LATERGJ

3. THE DISCUSSION FOCUSSED INITIALLY ON STOBBE'S ROLE AS ACTING PRESIDENT IN THE ABSENCE OF THE FEDERAL PRESIDENT. VON BRAUNMUEHL AND MEICHSNER SAID THAT THE MAXIMUM THAT STOBBE, AS ACTING PRESIDENT, WILL DO IN CONNECTION WITH BERLIN IS THAT WHICH PRESIDENT SCHEEL ALREADY DOES. HE SAID THAT THE FRG AND STOBBE WOULD ATTEMPT TO ENSURE THAT HIS ROLE IN THIS REGARD IS EVEN MORE MODEST THAN THAT OF SCHEEL'S.

4. THE US REP SAID THAT IN ADDITION TO THE FACT THAT

STOBBE WILL BE ACTING PRESIDENT FROM TIME TO TIME, THE  
PROBLEMS CAUSED BY HIS HOLDING THIS POSITION MIGHT BE

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 BONN 00898 02 OF 03 180122Z  
ACTION EUR-12

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R 171819Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BONN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4869  
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 BONN 00898

EXACERBATED BY THE FACT THAT THERE COULD BE A TENDENCY  
TO PERFORM OFFICIAL ACTS IN BERLIN MERELY BECAUSE HE  
IS THERE. AFTER OBTAINING THE OTHER REPS' CONCURRENCE  
WITH HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT THE QA DOES NOT PER SE MAKE  
ILLEGAL THE PERFORMANCE OF OFFICIAL FRG ACTS BY THE  
FEDERAL PRESIDENT WHILE IN BERLIN, THE US REP ASKED  
VON BRAUNMUEHL WHETHER IT IS CORRECT THAT SCHEEL NONE-  
THELESS DOES NOT PERFORM ANY OFFICIAL ACTS IN BERLIN  
EVEN THOUGH SUCH ACTS WOULD HAVE NO EFFECT ON THE CITY.  
IN OTHER WORDS, HE OBSERVED IT APPEARS THE FRG OBSERVES  
A DEGREE OF SELF-RESTRAINT AND LIMITATION WHICH IS NOT  
MANDATED BY THE  
QA. VON BRAUNMUEHL CONFIRMED THAT THIS  
WAS CORRECT AND , IN RESPONSE TO THE US REP'S NEXT  
QUESTION, SAID THAT STOBBE WOULD CONTINUE THIS PRACTICE,  
E.G. AS ACTING PRESIDENT HE WOULD NOT SIGN FRG LEGISLA-  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BONN 00898 02 OF 03 180122Z

TION IN BERLIN OR PERFORM OTHER OFFICIAL ACTS THERE. HE SAID THAT IT MAY BE THAT STOBBE WILL BE ASKED BY TELEPHONE TO MAKE MINOR INTERNAL FRG DECISIONS IN HIS CAPACITY AS BUNDESRAT PRESIDENT OR ACTING FRG PRESIDENT, BUT THAT THESE WOULD NEITHER BE PUBLIC NOR WOULD HE SIGN ANY OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS IN BERLIN.

5. THE US REP WELCOMED THIS ASSURANCE AND SAID THAT WHILE IT NO DOUBT CAUSED SOME INCONVENIENCE, IT WOULD APPEAR BEST FOR STOBBE TO GO TO THE FRG WHEN HE WAS TO PERFORM OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS AS ACTING PRESIDENT OR BUNDESRAT PRESIDENT INsofar AS SCHEEL DOES NOT PERFORM THEM IN BERLIN. THERE WAS SOME DISCUSSION OF CEREMONIAL ACTS BY PRESIDENT IN BERLIN (E.G. OPENING AN EXHIBITION) BUT THE CONSENSUS WAS THAT THESE ARE NOT ILLEGAL NOR WOULD THEY BE FREQUENT.

6. EYERS SAID THAT THERE ARE OTHER AREAS WHICH WOULD INVOLVE OFFICIAL ACTS BY STOBBE AS ACTING PRESIDENT WHICH MIGHT BEST BE AVOIDED, EVEN THOUGH HE WAS NOT IN BERLIN. FOR EXAMPLE, HE ASSUMED THE FRG WOULD ENSURE THAT PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS OF AMBASSADORS FROM EAST EUROPEAN AND THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES NOT BE SCHEDULED WHILE STOBBE WAS ACTING PRESIDENT EVEN THOUGH THESE ACTS WOULD OCCUR IN BONN. IF FOR NO OTHER REASON, THIS WOULD NOT BE IN THE INTEREST OF FRG BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THESE COUNTRIES.

7. A DISCUSSION OF WHAT THE PRESIDENT'S DUTIES ARE AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES THE PRESIDENT OF THE BUNDESRAT IS ACTING PRESIDENT LED TO THE SUGGESTION, WITH WHICH VON BRAUNMUEHL AGREED, THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL AS A PREVENTIVE MEASURE FOR THE FOREIGN OFFICE TO HAVE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BONN 00898 02 OF 03 180122Z

THE SUBJECT RESEARCHED AND A CHECKLIST PREPARED SO THAT WE CAN ANTICIPATE SPECIFIC OCCASIONS WHICH REQUIRE SPECIAL ATTENTION.

8. THE UK AND US REPS SAID THAT WHILE THEY HAD NO INSTRUCTIONS ON THE SUBJECT, THEY DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THEIR CAPITALS WOULD ATTEMPT TO PREVENT STOBBE FROM TAKING OFFICE AS CHAIRMAN OF THE BUNDESRAT. THEY RECOGNIZED THAT THERE COULD BE PROBLEMS WITH THE SOVIETS AND SAID THAT WE SIMPLY WOULD HAVE TO DEAL

WITH THESE. THE US REP NOTED THAT THE PRIMARY PROBLEM ABOUT WHICH SOMETHING CAN BE DONE SEEMS TO BE THE DANGER THAT A MINOR SLIP-UP IN COORDINATION MIGHT RESULT IN STOBBE'S DOING SOMETHING WHICH WE WOULD RATHER NOT HAVE TAKE PLACE AND THAT PARTICULARLY CAREFUL MONITORING OF HIS ACTIVITIES AS ACTING PRESIDENT WOULD BE NECESSARY. EYERS SAID THAT THE CONCERNS TO WHICH HE HAD ALLUDED EARLIER HAD LARGELY BEEN SATISFIED BY THE ASSURANCES GIVEN BY VON BRAUNMUEHL AND MEICHSNER AND AGREED THAT CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE MATTER WAS NECESSARY. THE FRENCH REP (RICHARD) DID NOT COMMENT ON THE QUAI'S LIKELY REACTION ALTHOUGH HIS SILENCE SHOULD BE TAKEN MORE AS A SIGN OF CAUTION THAN OF DISAGREEMENT.

9. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THAT THIS WAS A PARTICULARLY USEFUL MEETING AND THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE WILL DO WHAT IT CAN TO MINIMIZE EXPECTED DIFFICULTIES WITH THE SOVIETS OVER STOBBE'S ELECTION AS BUNDESRAT PRESIDENT. THIS COULD BE ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS BERLIN PROBLEMS .WE WILL HAVE WITH THE SOVIETS DURING THE COMING YEAR OR TWO. AT THE DECEMBER 7 QUADRIPARTITE MEETING ON BERLIN, FRG STATE SECRETARY VAN WELL, IN THE DISCUSSION OF THE POLITICAL DIRECTORS' REPORT TO MINISTERS, CITED STOBBE'S ELECTION AS BEING EVEN MORE DISTURBING THAN BERLIN'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE EC IN TERMS OF IMPENDING DIFFICULTIES WITH THE SOVIETS.  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BONN 00898 02 OF 03 180122Z

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BONN 00898 03 OF 03 171846Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 BONN 00898

THE REASONS GIVEN WERE THE SAME AS THOSE IN REF E. A GREAT DEAL OF CARE WILL BE REQUIRED IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE DIFFICULTIES WITH THE SOVIETS. HOWEVER, AT THIS STAGE THE FOREIGN OFFICE SEEMS TO BE ON THE RIGHT TRACK AND THIS, COMBINED WITH STOBBE'S REPUTATION FOR RESERVE AND DISCRETION, SHOULD HELP KEEP THE PROBLEM MANAGEABLE.

10. ALTHOUGH VON BRAUNMUEHL DID NOT SPECIFICALLY ASK FOR ALLIED CAPITALS' ASSURANCES THAT THEY WILL NOT SEEK TO BLOCK STOBBE'S ELECTION AS BUNDESRAT PRESIDENT THIS FALL, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF WE COULD OFFER THEM. STOBBE'S ELECTION DOES NOT VIOLATE THE QA; BERLIN MAYORS HAVE HELD THE OFFICE BEFORE AND, ON THE ROTATIONAL BASIS OF THE OFFICE, IT IS BERLIN'S TURN FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1967 (REF D). FINALLY, FOR THE ALLIES TO SEEK TO HAVE BERLIN PASS ITS TURN WOULD CREATE SERIOUS  
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PAGE 02 BONN 00898 03 OF 03 171846Z

BILATERAL POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES WITH THE FRG. THE FRENCH HERE AT LEAST HAVE TENTATIVELY MENTIONED THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING BERLIN PASS ITS TURN BUT HAVE NOT PRESSED THE IDEA.

11. IF THE DEPARTMENT CONCURS, WE WOULD PROPOSE TO SUGGEST TO THE UK AND FRENCH REPS HERE THAT ALL THREE INFORM THE FRG IN THE BONN GROUP THAT: A) OUR CAPITALS HAVE NO REASON TO ANTICIPATE SUGGESTING THAT STOBBE NOT BE ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE BUNDESRAT; AND B) THAT CONTINUED CLOSE MONITORING AND COORDINATION BY THE FRG AND THE ALLIES ON THE SUBJECT OF STOBBE'S ELECTION AND WHAT HE WILL OR WILL NOT DO IN HIS NEW OFFICE WILL BE NECESSARY.

12. WE BELIEVE THAT THE FOREGOING WILL BE HELPFUL TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE IN DEALING WITH THE REST OF THE FRG BUREAUCRACY AND TRIPARTITE DISCUSSION WITH THE FRENCH OF THE PROPOSAL FOR AN ALLIED STATEMENT WILL

HELP UNCOVER ANY DIFFICULTIES WE MIGHT HAVE WITH THEM.

13. ACTION REQUESTED: SEE PARAGRAPH 11.  
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## Message Attributes

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